

### REMARKS

This application has been further carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 4, 2008. Claims 20, 24, 25, 27 and 29 remain pending in the application, with Claim 30 having been canceled. Claims 20, 24, 25 and 27 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 20, 24, 25, 27 and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 7,042,585 (Whitmarsh) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,822,754 (Shiohara '754) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,198,542 (Tabata), and Claim 30 was rejected under § 103(a) over Whitmarsh in view of Shiohara '754 and Tabata and further in view of U.S. Publication No. 6,804,019 (Shiohara '019). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The invention concerns a user apparatus selecting a print shop to send a print order to, and in particular, the invention performs a two step selection process. In the invention, a user apparatus notifies a print management apparatus of a use condition input by a user that includes information designating an area where a print shop is located. The print management apparatus searches for print shops meeting the use condition and the results are provided to the user apparatus. The user apparatus obtains the print shop information for a plurality of print shops satisfying the use condition and then forms print data using a printer driver installed in the user apparatus. The print data is formed in accordance with a print condition that is different from the use condition and which does not include the information designating the area where the print shop is located. The user apparatus then judges whether each of the plurality of print shops can print the formed

print data based on the print condition and a print ability of each of the plurality of print shops. A selection is then made of a print shop from among those judged as being able to print the formed print data, and a print order is formed accordingly.

Referring specifically to the claims, amended independent Claim 20 is directed to a user apparatus that communicates with a print management apparatus via a network, comprising notifying means for notifying the print management apparatus of a use condition which is set according to an operation of a user, the use condition including information for designating an area where a print shop having a print apparatus is located, print shop information obtaining means for obtaining, in advance, print shop information for a plurality of print shops each satisfying the notified use condition, from the print management apparatus, print data forming means for forming print data by using a printer driver installed in the user apparatus, in accordance with a print condition which is set according to the operation of the user, the print condition being different from the use condition and not including the information for designating the area where the print shop having the print apparatus is located, judgment means for judging whether each of the plurality of print shops included in the print shop information obtained in advance by the print shop information obtaining means can print the print data formed by the print data forming means, on the basis of the print condition of the print data and a print ability of each of the plurality of print shops, selection means for selecting a print shop to order print processing of the formed print data, from among the print shops judged by the judgment means as the print shops which can print the formed print data, and print order forming means for forming a print order, including the designation of the selected print shop.

Claims 24 is a system claim that includes the user apparatus of Claim 20, while Claims 25 and 27 are computer medium and method claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to apparatus Claim 20.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the claimed two step print shop selection process of a user apparatus 1) notifying a print management apparatus of a use condition which is set according to an operation of a user, the use condition including information for designating an area where a print shop having a print apparatus is located, obtaining, in advance, print shop information for a plurality of print shops each satisfying the notified use condition, from the print management apparatus, and 2) forming print data by using a printer driver installed in the user apparatus, in accordance with a print condition which is set according to the operation of the user, the print condition being different from the use condition and not including the information for designating the area where the print shop having the print apparatus is located, judging whether each of the plurality of print shops included in the print shop information obtained in advance by the print shop information obtaining means/step can print the print data formed by the print data forming means/step, on the basis of the print condition of the print data and a print ability of each of the plurality of print shops, and selecting a print shop to order print processing of the formed print data, from among the print shops judged by the judgment means/step as the print shops which can print the formed print data.

Whitmarsh is seen to disclose a print job brokering system that compares a print request from a customer with print ability of each of a plurality of print providers and

selects a print provider from the print providers which satisfy the comparison matching of the print request and the print ability. That is, this reference merely teaches a one-step limitation of the print provider candidates to select the print provider to which the print request is sent, which at best, may be seen to correspond to the searching for a print shop based on a use condition. However, the use condition of Whitmarsh is not seen to include information for designating an area where a print shop having a print apparatus is located.

Shiohara '754 is seen to disclose a system for selecting a printer for processing a print job based on availability of the printer. This system sends a temporary print request to each of a plurality of print apparatuses before transmission of an exact print request to obtain print processing information (e.g., print wait time) from each print apparatus, and the selects the print apparatus on the basis of the obtained print processing information to send thereto the exact print request. That is, this reference also merely teaches a one-step limitation of the print apparatus candidates to select the print apparatus to send the print request thereto. Moreover, like Whitmarsh, Shiohara '754 is not seen to notify a use condition that includes information designating an area in which a print shop having a print apparatus is located. Thus, Shiohara '754 is not seen to add anything that, when combined with Whitmarsh, would have resulted in the invention.

Tabata is relied on as only as prior art which teaches to form screen information to display print shops. However, Tabata is not seen to teach anything that, when combined with Whitmarsh and/or Shiohara '754, would have resulted in the present invention. Specifically, the proposed combination of Whitmarsh, Shiohara '754 and Tabata would not have resulted in the features of the claimed two step print shop selection process of a user apparatus 1) notifying a print management apparatus of a use condition

which is set according to an operation of a user, the use condition including information for designating an area where a print shop having a print apparatus is located, obtaining, in advance, print shop information for a plurality of print shops each satisfying the notified use condition, from the print management apparatus, and 2) forming print data by using a printer driver installed in the user apparatus, in accordance with a print condition which is set according to the operation of the user, the print condition being different from the use condition and not including the information for designating the area where the print shop having the print apparatus is located, judging whether each of the plurality of print shops included in the print shop information obtained in advance by the print shop information obtaining means/step can print the print data formed by the print data forming means/step, on the basis of the print condition of the print data and a print ability of each of the plurality of print shops, and selecting a print shop to order print processing of the formed print data, from among the print shops judged by the judgment means/step as the print shops which can print the formed print data.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, amended independent Claims 20, 24, 25 and 27 are believed to be allowable.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicants undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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